GOVERNMENT BILL

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 1988.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is 1.50 p.m. now. Do you want to adjourn for half an hour or one hour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: One hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then you have to sit one hour late. We have to complete the debate today.

Now we adjourn till 2.50 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at fifty minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at fifty four minutes past two of the clock,

The Deputy Chairman in the Chair.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Madam Deputy Chairman, I am happy that after your election for the fourth time as the Deputy Chairman of this House, I have the privilege of making some observations on the floor of this House when you are occupying the Chair. Madam, with your permission, I want to start the discussion on the functioning of the Ministry of External Affairs. There is no doubt that the developments of the last few months have brought India into the focus of international arena and in the fitness of things, the country must respond to the issues, with which we are confronted, in a unified manner, if possible. Why I am saying 'if possible' is, from the developments which have taken place over the last few weeks it appears to me—I may be wrong—that there is no adequate reflection on the gravity of the situation in the behaviour and conduct, in the functioning of the Government. We are having a discussion on the External Affairs Ministry when there is no full-fledged Foreign Minister. The Prime Minister is being burdened. It is not unusual. also it has happened. During also it has happened. But today's situation is an extraordinary situation. Perhaps, it requires urgent attention of a full-fledged Cabinet Minister for dealing with the subject. I am not making any reflection on the Minister of State who is looking after this work. She is quite competent. But all of us are aware that in this protocol-oriented world of diplomacy, rank and status count. Thereafter, it is necessary that the Ministry must have a proper head. Of course, in every country, Foreign Policy is basically the Prime Minister's portfolio, but, at the same time, without a full-fledged Foreign Minister to aid and advise the Prime Minister, it becomes very difficult for him to transact that business. This point, I thought, I should strike at in the very beginning.

In the last Session, some of these issues were raised by me and also by my colleagues. When the Prime Minister came out with the National Agenda for governance, in that National Agenda for governance, the Prime Minister indicated that he would like to emphasise on a new mode of governance where majority, arithmetic and number are not essentially important; there should be involvement, there should be consensus on major issues; we welcome it. But what did we find, Madam, on the ground? In the same document where he talked of introducing a new culture of governance, governance through consensus, we found